



COLUMBIA COUNTY SHELTER-IN-PLACE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

The term "Shelter-In-Place" means to seek immediate shelter and remain there during a chemical emergency rather than evacuate the area. There are occasions when the option to evacuate the area is not considered (e.g., a time constraint, or when evacuation would subject you to greater risk). Unless otherwise instructed to evacuate, sheltering in a pre-determined safe location in your home or place of work is the preferred method of safely waiting out a hazardous materials release. In place sheltering usually lasts no more than one-to-two hours and preparations, made in advance, can ensure that the event is as comfortable as possible.

The decision to Shelter-In-Place (SIP) or evacuate is usually made by local emergency management personnel or a representative of the chemical facility experiencing the release. It is a good idea for you, if you live near a chemical facility, to make contact with the facility to find out what chemicals they may have on hand and what plans are in place to handle a chemical spill. In many cases, facilities have procedures in place to notify you in the event of a chemical release.

If you are asked to Shelter-In-Place, here is a list of what to do:

- First, remain calm.
- If you are outdoors go inside immediately (an interior room without windows is preferable). Do not call 911 unless you are reporting an immediate life-threatening situation. Do not attempt to get your children from their school or day care center. Staff members are trained to protect your children and will institute shelter-in-place procedures where they are located.
- Next, close all windows and doors. Place pre-cut plastic sheeting over windows, and tape in place.
- Close all outside air vents. Turn off cooling, heating or ventilating systems. Cover cracks under doors with damp towels. If you have a fireplace, put out the fire and close the damper. Tape cracks and other openings such as electrical outlets and cable television outlets for extra protection. Keep pets indoors.
- Lastly, listen carefully to a portable radio for instructions from emergency officials.

Assemble your own Shelter-In-Place kit to aid you when the need arises. A simple kit can be assembled relatively inexpensively (usually under \$50.00) with the following items:

- A roll of plastic sheeting, precut to fit any windows in the room.
- A roll of duct tape.
- Bath towels to place under any openings in doorways (dampen towels first).
- A battery-operated radio, with extra batteries, tuned to the local Emergency Alert Station (EAS).

- Bottled water and some sort of snack food.

Responsibilities of the Departmental Safety Officers:

- In preparation for the need to "Shelter-In-Place," prepare an SIP kit to include the items listed above. You should obtain enough plastic sheeting to cover all windows inside your pre-designated shelter room within your work area. (Choose an interior room in your work area with a telephone, computer with email, NOAA Alert Radio, and rest room, if possible). Plastic should be measured and cut to fit all outside windows in your shelter room. Use a marker to write on the plastic which window it is cut for.
- Also, in preparation, assure that all employees under your responsibility as Safety Officer obtain a copy of the this SOP and understand the concept of "Shelter-In-Place."
- Upon notification or realization that Shelter-In-Place is necessary due to an accidental or intentional chemical release, immediately check outside of your building (including hallways) and order everyone to get inside at once.
- Close all outside air vents. Turn off cooling, heating, or ventilating systems including exhaust fans in rest rooms. (Safety Officers need to know how to turn off systems in advance).
- Close and lock all windows and doors. Nobody in or out until all clear is given.
- Use duct tape to place the pre-cut plastic over all outside windows in your shelter room.
- Use damp towels or rags to stuff up under doors in your shelter room, covering all cracks.
- Use duct tape to cover all cracks and other openings in the shelter room. These include electrical outlets and cable television outlets.
- Keep everyone inside until the all clear. This could be from one to three hours depending on the type, size, and location of the chemical release.
- Make a list of everyone's name inside your SIP zone.